



*Original Dixieland Jazz Band*

## Impacts of Alternative B: NPS Personal Services Emphasis

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

#### Analysis

**Archeological Resources.** Landscaping and other ground disturbance associated with the renovation of the Old U.S. Mint could adversely impact unknown archeological resources by disturbing the integrity of archeological deposits. However, by identifying and evaluating archeological resources and implementing measures that would avoid or mitigate their disturbance, the adverse effects of ground disturbance would be eliminated or minimized (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

**Cultural Landscapes.** The Old U.S. Mint is a prominent feature in the Vieux Carré. Renovating the Mint would be a positive impact in that it would help perpetuate the function of the structure as a public building as well as maintain its physical appearance. Adding more

parking spaces on the Vieux Carré side of the building could create a minor adverse visual impact.

**Parades.** Developing cooperative agreements to streamline the parade permit process and obtaining financial support to defray parade costs would remove or reduce some of the growing barriers to parading. This would make it easier for participating groups to organize and conduct parades, helping continue this important cultural tradition.

park service-sponsored music instruction and interpretive programs would also benefit the parade tradition by fostering an understanding and appreciation of this tradition among future participants and audiences.

Increased staffing and funding would also benefit parading by allowing more resources to be directed at preserving this tradition. NPS facilitation of parading events would benefit

the tradition by providing centralized coordination, which currently is sometimes lacking.

Continuing the New Orleans parade tradition would benefit jazz musicians by providing a venue for them to gain experience and exposure. It would positively benefit local communities and groups by providing a forum to express group identity and maintain the connections these groups and individuals have to the New Orleans jazz tradition.

**Communities, Historic Structures, and Landmarks.** The emphasis on preserving structures and sites associated with early jazz would benefit these resources by maintaining and preserving the physical integrity, appearance, and “feel” of structures, landmarks, and landscapes that comprise historical jazz communities and settings. The adaptive use of the Old U.S. Mint by the National Park Service would benefit it by helping ensure its continued use as a public building as well as its preservation. Renovating and adaptively using other structures could provide more locations for jazz performances or education, which would help ensure the continued maintenance and use of these structures.

The renovation of historic structures could result in adverse impacts such as the loss of historic fabric. However, the use of replica or historically compatible replacement fabric, construction methods, and other preservation techniques would minimize or mitigate these impacts (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

The proposed curatorial storage facilities at the Mint would have a positive impact by providing a safe and secure storage area for jazz-related artifacts, documents, and memorabilia and by making these objects more available for exhibit and research.

The emphasis on continuing research and collecting oral history interviews would fill information gaps and preserve firsthand knowledge relating to the evolution and development of jazz. These efforts could yield

important information such as the past appearance and configuration of structures, the previous uses of structures and settings, or a structure’s or site’s association with prominent jazz personages. This information would allow for more accurate renovation and would more clearly define the roles and contexts of structures, landmarks, and communities linked to the jazz tradition. However, even with the emphasis on research and interviews, the funding and staffing levels of this alternative might not be sufficient to prevent the loss of information due to deterioration and attrition, which would be a irreversible adverse effect.

## Conclusions

Cultural resources would benefit in the short and long term. Many tangible and intangible features that characterize New Orleans jazz (e.g., the parade tradition and historic structures) would be supported or preserved. Continuing research would yield important historical and information that would facilitate the management jazz cultural resources.

Adverse impacts resulting from landscaping and renovation would be avoided or mitigated by carrying out cultural resource compliance. Adding parking spaces to the U.S. Old Mint could be a minor, negative visual impact. Funding and staffing levels might not be sufficient to prevent negative impacts resulting from the loss of oral history informants and some structures.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Implementing alternative B would cause no adverse impacts to natural resources.

## **VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

### **Analysis**

#### **Access, Circulation, and Parking.**

Continuing to rely on the existing transportation infrastructure and park facilities would afford visitors cost-effective ways to access and circulate through the park, especially in the Vieux Carré area.

The addition of park service-sponsored tours to sites in outlying historical communities would supplement existing self-guided and commercial bus tours and would enhance opportunities to access these areas. Publicity advertising events would enhance visitor awareness of the locations of events throughout the city, which would enhance access to sites and events.

Locating the visitor center in the Old U.S. Mint would provide easy access to visitors touring the Vieux Carré on foot. Orientation and program/events information distributed at the visitor center would assist visitors in locating and gaining access to jazz activities throughout New Orleans.

Interpreting and providing access to jazz activities and sites outside the Vieux Carré would enhance visitor circulation by providing alternate or new interpretive locations, which could relieve pressure and congestion around well-known sites in the Vieux Carré.

As visitation increased, minor adverse impacts to circulation might occur at the Old U.S. Mint. The increased numbers of visitors arriving at the Mint by bus could cause congestion and safety issues at drop-off locations. Coordinating with city officials to regulate traffic could resolve or reduce many of these problems. The need to park buses could reduce the number of existing vehicle parking spaces, effectively limiting access to the Mint by visitors arriving in motorized vehicles. Redesigning the Mint's grounds and

adding parking spaces could mitigate the adverse effect of crowding and congestion stemming from bus arrivals.

**Interpretation.** A visitor center with centralized interpretive functions would enhance the visitor experience in numerous ways. Presenting a wide range of personal interpretive programs and "informances" would allow the park to interpret the basic history of jazz at a wide range of levels and in ways that would appeal to the park's eclectic audiences. Structuring personal programs so that they matched park interpretive themes would reduce competition with non-Park Service events and would help achieve park interpretive goals.

Holding onsite and offsite programs and events throughout the city and at varied times would give visitors the flexibility to match their interests and the time they have scheduled for their visits with presentations and events. Publicizing events through various media and interpretive handouts would heighten public awareness of events and would enhance visitor opportunities to appreciate and learn more about jazz.

Employing well-trained musicians and interpreters would ensure that visitors received high-quality programming that balanced entertainment and interpretation. However, engaging well-trained musicians/staff and developing high-quality programs could be costly and time-consuming and would require considerable coordination and teamwork between NPS staff, performers, and partners. Presenting high-quality programming could be limited by available funding and staffing priorities, or it could require that funding and staff be diverted from other important program areas to maintain high programming standards.

Interpretive performances would also provide opportunities for young musicians to find encouragement and employment playing traditional and less commercial forms of jazz, which could enhance support for lesser-known forms of jazz. The magnitude of these impacts

would depend largely on staff and partnership support of these activities.

Onsite and offsite personal programs would also allow informal contacts between NPS staff/volunteers and visitors. For many visitors this form of contact would be a key element in a high-quality visitor experience.

Modestly upgrading interpretive media and exhibits in cost-effective ways would moderately enhance the park's ability to communicate the park's purpose, significance, and interpretive themes, which in turn would underscore the park's identity and mission.

Providing upgraded exhibits, opportunities for informal contact with NPS staff and volunteers, and interpretive media and brochures would allow visitors with limited time to become more informed about the origins and history of jazz. The opportunity for visitors to purchase literature or interpretive memorabilia at a modest sales area would be meaningful to many visitors. Purchased items could provide additional information or remind visitors of their park experiences well after their visit, and thus could positively reinforce their overall visitor experience. Developing an internet web site for the park would provide basic park information that could be obtained globally.

**Education.** The increased number of onsite and offsite educational programs would enhance opportunities for reaching a wide range of students and perpetuating the New Orleans jazz tradition. Coordinating NPS programs with ongoing curricula in local schools and institutions would make programs relevant to students. Targeting disadvantaged groups would provide important educational opportunities for groups with limited resources.

Working closely with the New Orleans Jazz Commission and employing professional musicians to assist in educational programs would provide a high-quality, fostering atmosphere for students and potential musi-

cians. Music appreciation classes would produce larger audiences for traditional and less commercial forms of jazz. Targeted partnerships would improve access to jazz education for those with little previous experience. The positive impacts of educational programs would be limited, however, by available NPS funding and staffing.

**Visitor Services.** Providing orientation and events information in an accessible and central location would help visitors plan their visits and activities. A comprehensive orientation to the park and the surrounding environs could reduce visitor confusion and frustration. Providing a prominent meeting area would help groups to coordinate their activities, while the presence of restrooms, a modest sales area, exhibit rooms, and theaters would represent features much of the public has come to expect at national parks.

**Carrying Capacity.** Carrying capacity data for this new park is incomplete. Implementing the actions under alternative B, however, would be expected to increase visitation in areas such as the Old U.S. Mint at some sites in historic jazz communities, and at certain jazz programs/ events. Overcrowding, traffic congestion, public safety, vehicle emissions, noise, and unwanted intrusions into local communities could result. These adverse impacts would probably be limited in duration and minor to moderate in intensity. The development of resource condition / visitor experience indicators and standards and a monitoring program (to be developed after the implementation of this plan) would mitigate or eliminate most of these adverse impacts. Working with local authorities to resolve traffic congestion and visitor circulation problems could also mitigate these adverse impacts.

## **Conclusions**

The visitor experience would benefit in a number of ways. Conducting a wide variety of programs throughout the city would create greater access to jazz events. Presenting a range of high-quality personal programs would allow audiences to attend events that matched or challenged their interest levels. Innovative educational programs would provide high-quality opportunities for young musicians and students.

Increases in visitation could create minor to moderate adverse effects on the park carrying capacity, many of which could be mitigated.

Positive impacts would be limited by the availability of NPS funding and staff.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

### **Analysis**

Spending approximately \$3.3 million on construction and other development-related activities would have short-term, positive benefits in the form of increased jobs and construction. These benefits would not occur all at once but would be spread over the life of the development project. Relatively few individuals and firms would share in these benefits.

Increasing the park's staffing levels to 12 full-time equivalent positions would benefit the local economy by creating a need for housing, goods, and services, although the impact would be minimal. Park expenditures for goods and services, stemming from its annual budget of \$960,200, would also moderately benefit the local economy.

Since New Orleans, with its many attractions (including the Vieux Carré), is already a destination for a large number of tourists, and there is already a thriving tourism industry in the city, the park alone would not be expected to draw large numbers of additional visitors to

the New Orleans region. Many visitors to the region might not even know the park existed prior to their visit to New Orleans. Drawing upon the numerous visitors that come to the Vieux Carré, however, it would be expected that large numbers of visitors would visit the park and many regional residents would be exposed to park-supported programs related to jazz. Because of the extent of programs and exhibits, some visitors might make the park the focus of their visit or choose to extend their visit to take advantage of what the park has to offer. The park would definitely enhance business opportunities in the immediate vicinity of the Mint by attracting more tourists to this portion of the Vieux Carré and the nearby neighborhood.

Developing and operating the park would have a positive social benefit on the local community. The NPS presence would be an attractive addition for the neighborhood around the Mint because of the interpretive, educational, and recreational opportunities it would offer. The park would be an open, accessible, and attractive place for the people of the local area. Increased cultural/historical awareness and improved visitor experiences would result. It is expected that the park might attract a large amount of use from neighborhoods and other New Orleans residents, as well as from the many tourists who visited the Vieux Carré.

### **Conclusions**

A relatively few individuals and firms would benefit economically from the \$3.3 million development budget and the \$960,000 annual operating budget for the park, and these benefits might be significant for those affected. However, the overall dollar impact would be minor due to the large size of the New Orleans regional economy.

While fulfilling its NPS mission, the park would be expected to become a valued neighbor in the local community. The park's facilities and programs would provide positive

social benefits for both visitors to the park and residents of the local community.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS**

### **Analysis**

Renovating the Mint would result in up to 3,000 square-feet being designated for offices and support areas such as a storage, a library, and research activities. Implementing alternative B would cost approximately \$3.3 million for development and \$960,000 for annual operations. These funding and staffing levels would permit the park to address the management goals presented in this plan, which could allow the park to achieve its mission.

### **Conclusions**

Administration and operations would benefit from expanding the total funding base to approximately \$4.2 million and increasing staffing levels to 12 full-time equivalent positions, which would potentially permit the park to achieve its mission.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Analysis**

Developing partnerships would not be a priority. Seeking and maintaining limited partnerships relating to jazz performances, events, and educational programs would continue to moderately benefit the park's visitor experience, but the bulk of the programming would be executed by the Park Service.

### **Conclusions**

Partnership would have minimal to moderate beneficial effects on park activities.

## **OTHER IMPACTS**

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Currently the understanding and appreciation of jazz and the jazz heritage is being promoted by the National Park Service, schools, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental entities. This is resulting in an increased awareness of this musical art form. Implementing alternative B would have a beneficial effect by helping this process to accelerate.

Under alternative B the efforts of the Park Service and other preservation partners to help preserve neighborhoods and sites associated with early jazz might be enough to outweigh the forces of change, decay, and decisions by individual owners that threaten these fragile areas, although the overall impact might still be a loss of tangible resources related to early jazz history.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Effects**

Some historic structures and other cultural resources would be lost due to deterioration and attrition. Any archeological sites encountered during ground-disturbing activities and requiring mitigation through excavation would constitute an irreversible loss since excavation destroys the resource as a database (unless mitigated).

### **The Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and Maintenance and the Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity**

Developing a visitor center and other park facilities for public education and enjoyment could result in the removal of 1 acre or less of vegetation and soil from natural productivity.

Constructing park facilities and wayside exhibits could create increased noise, dust, and the disruption of visitor access and circulation, which would adversely effect the visitor experience. These would be temporary impacts.

### **Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources**

Under alternative B approximately \$1.5 million dollars would be spent in renovating the Mint and \$1.85 million would be used to develop and install interpretive materials and displays. These costs would be irreversible.